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ABSTRACT

The use of reinforcement as a treatment technique by a counselor is demonstrated. Its purpose is two-fold: (1) to evaluate the effectiveness of the technique; and (2) to actively involve the participant in the demonstration. A pre-test involves presentation of a hypothetical situation from which the participant is to select: (1) problem behaviors; (2) antecedents of behaviors; (3) consequences; and (4) strategies for rectifying the situation. One then is invited to observe a role play of a typical initial interview by a behavioral counselor. He is to compare his observations on the four situational aspects with those of the counselors. A post-test is then presented to ascertain the effectiveness of the approach. A second section on systematic desensitization (piecemeal breaking down of maladaptive anxious behavior) for school counselors follows the same format as the initial section. The authors contend that the use of reinforcement and systematic desensitization would be more realistic if demonstrated instead of described and would be more meaningful if the counselors were involved. (TL)

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# "Behavioral Counseling with Self-Referred Clients"

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CG 005 396

THE USE OF REINFORCEMENT AS A TREATMENT TECHNIQUE BY A COUNSELOR

Please DO NOT OPEN THE HANDOUT until you are asked to do so

Directions

We plan to demonstrate how a behavioral counselor might use reinforcement as a treatment technique. The handout is to be used as we progress through the demonstration. Its purpose is twofold. (1) To provide us with an evaluation of our effectiveness; (2) to allow you to actively respond during the demonstration. Your cooperation will really be appreciated.

PLEASE!

It is important that you progress one page at a time. When directed -- pull open to the second page.

(Thanks for not opening the handout until you were directed to do so!)

Below is a pre-test. Simply circle the letters which correspond to the correct responses. Be careful, there may be more <u>than one</u> correct response.

Bill is consistently late for class. When he enters the room late, many students look at him and some laugh and snicker. During class discussions he often talks out without obtaining permission. The teacher usually tells him to be quiet.

1. <u>The problem behaviors are</u>:

(a) talking out without permission,
(b) not paying attention during discussions,
(c) being tardy,
(d) Bill's immature self-concept.

2. <u>The antecedent of talking out without permission is</u>:

(a) coming late to class,
(b) students look and snicker,
(c) class discussions,
(d) the teacher says be quiet.

3. <u>The consequences of being late for class are</u>:

(a) talking out without permission,
(b) the teacher says be quiet,
(c) students look at Bill,
(d) students snicker at Bill.

4. <u>Select the best of the following three strategies. All of them are designed to help Bill arrive at class on time more often.</u>

(a) The teacher and the counselor decide to install a program in which Bill is excluded from the class each time that he is late. The teacher will inform the school principal and Bill's parents each time that he is late to class.

(b) The counselor invites Bill to the office to discuss the problem. During the interview Bill suggests that getting along better with his teacher is something he would like to do. The counselor encourages him and sets up a schedule of appointments to see him regarding his problem.

(c) The teacher has observed that Bill responds positively to her approval. The counselor suggests she should respond positively to Bill each time he arrives to class on time. The other students are to be rewarded for not paying attention to Bill when he is late.

When directed, please turn the page
Wait now!
Ready?

(Good show! You completed the pre-test. Let's go on.)

Now that you have finished the pre-test we are going to role play a typical initial interview by a behavioral counselor. Your first task will be to select the problem behaviors mentioned by Ted, the teacher, in the interview. The list below contains all of the problem behaviors Ted will mention as well as some he will not mention. Please underline only those that he mentions.

1. Talking out without permission.
2. Talking back to teacher.
3. Doesn't follow directions.
4. Doesn't turn in homework.
5. Is not self actualized.
6. Is late for class.
7. Bugs the principal.
8. Doesn't volunteer in class.
9. Doesn't listen to teacher led presentations.
10. Talks to other students.
11. Gets angry when a response is requested.

Wait a bit. Turn the page when instructed and compare those problems that you circled with those that we mentioned in the interview.

(All right. Let's see how you did.)

Specific problem behaviors mentioned by Ted, the teacher, in the interview were:

2. Talking back to teacher.

8. Doesn't volunteer in class

11. Gets angry when a response is requested.

(How did you do? Let's go on and see what Ted and counselor decide to focus on.)

Ted and the counselor have selected problem number 8 to focus on first. Notice that they do not attempt to deal with all of the problems at once. They have decided to focus on increasing the number of volunteered responses.

As you listen to the next part of the interview circle the antecedents and consequences that are mentioned. Antecedents (A) are the situations in which Dan has the opportunity to volunteer. Consequences (C) are the actions which immediately followed the behavior, in this case Dan's volunteered responses.

(Let's listen now for the A's and C's)

| A | B | C |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Dan enters the room. | Volunteered Responses | 1. Teacher ignores Dan's responses. |
| 2. Teacher asks class a question. | | 2. Teacher corrects Dan when he is wrong. |
| 3. Students are asked to enter in a dialogue with teacher. | | 3. Teacher praises Dan. |
| 4. Students are asked to enter in a dialogue with another student. | | 4. Students laugh at Dan when he makes an error. |
| 5. Students are to read in text. | | 5. Teacher sometimes does not call on Dan when he offers to volunteer. |

Finished? Good! Turn the page and compare your answers with those listed.

Here are the antecedents and consequences we listed.

| A | B | C |
|---|---|---|
| 2. Teacher asks class a question. | Volunteered Responses | 1. Teacher ignores Dan's responses. |
| 3. Students are asked to enter in a dialogue with teacher. | | 2. Teacher corrects Dan when he is wrong. |
| 4. Students are asked to enter in a dialogue with another student. | | 4. Students laugh at Dan when he makes an error. |
| | | 5. Teacher sometimes does not call on Dan when he offers to volunteer. |

Well, you got most of them, right?! "To err is . . ."

Now read the three possible strategies listed below that the counselor and Ted could develop. Listen now to the interview and circle the number of the strategy you hear them agree upon.

1. The teacher is to say "very good" each time a student volunteers. Students who don't volunteer will be called on to answer specific questions.

2. The teacher is to give points for class participation. These points will be recorded and provide the basis on which part of the class grade is earned. A point will be earned each day Dan volunteers two or more times.

3. The teacher will record an F each day for each student who does not volunteer at least once during the class. Furthermore the teacher will think hard about the need to get Dan to do a better job; i.e., think positive.

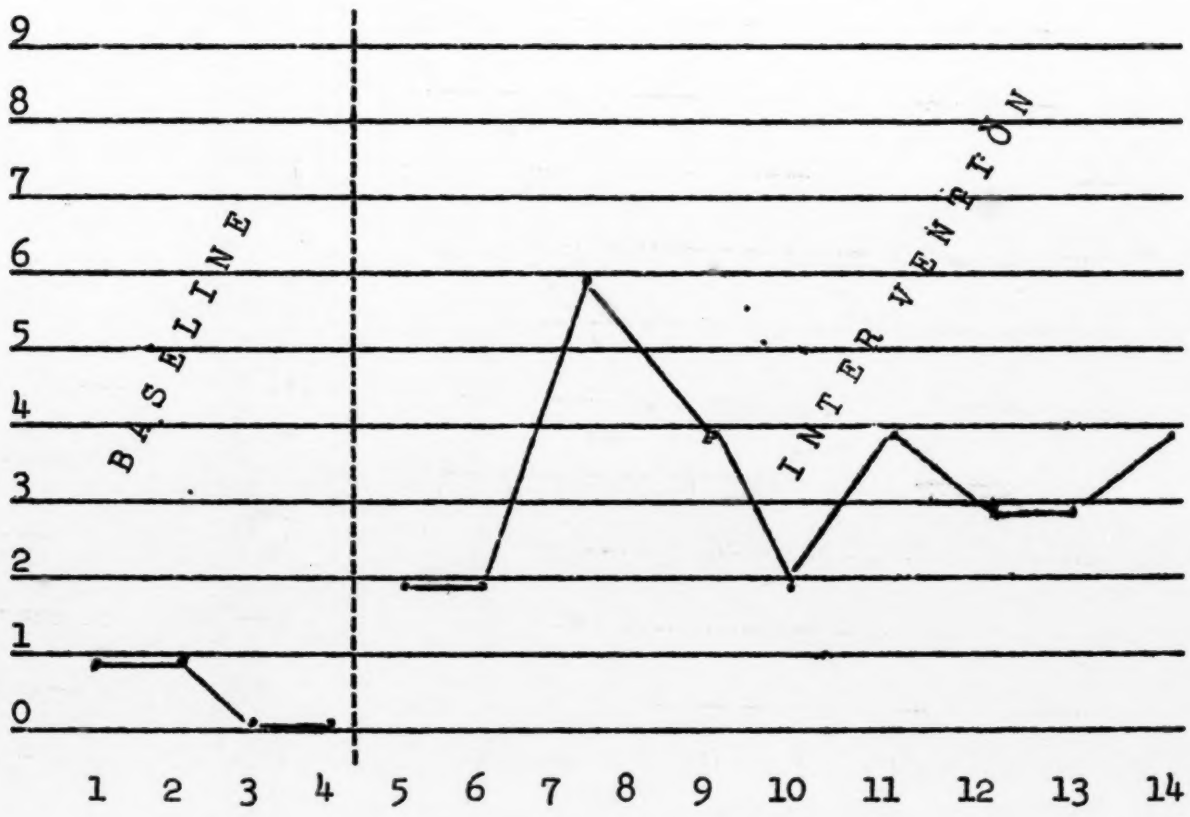
(Turn the page "at will"!)

Strategy No. 2 was correct

(How's it going?)

Now look over the chart below. The data was taken for the four days preceding the interview (baseline) and for the ten days following the introduction of the intervention.[1]

Dan's Voluntary Responses in German Class




Just like everyone else we chose to use a success as an example of our work. If it had not been a success, the counselor and Ted would have known it becasue they kept data. They then would have developed a new strategy to try.

Turn the page to see what the teacher used to record volunteered responses.

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1. This data is from an actual case now in progress at Wilbur Junior High School, Palo Alto, California. Miss Jane Carswell, Counselor and Miss Pamela Newman, German teacher, Drs. Carl E. Thoresen and Theodore G. Alper, Consultants.

Name _____

Deutsch 2

| (Voluntary responses:) | | | | | | | Punkte |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Montag: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | ____ |
| Dienstag: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | ____ |
| Mittwoch: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | ____ |
| Donnerstag: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | ____ |
| Freitag: | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | ____ |
| | | | | | | Total: | ____ |

Almost there!

Now let's see what you've learned.

Turn the page, please.

Below is the post-test. Please finish it and then tear out the pre-test and post-test. Fold them in the middle and hand them forward. The data will help us to evaluate our effectiveness. We appreciate your cooperation.

Bill is consistently late for class. When he enters the room late, many students look at him and some laugh and snicker. During class discussions he often talks out without obtaining permission. The teacher usually tells him to be quiet.

1. The problem behaviors are:

   (a) talking out without permission,
   (b) not paying attention during discussions,
   (c) being tardy
   (d) Bill's immature self-concept.

2. The antecedent of talking out without permission is:

   (a) coming late to class,
   (b) students look and snicker,
   (c) class discussions,
   (d) the teacher says be quiet.

3. The consequences of being late for class are:

   (a) talking out without permission,
   (b) the teacher says be quiet,
   (c) students look at Bill,
   (d) students snicker at Bill.

4. Select the best of the following three strategies. All of them are designed to help Bill arrive at class on time more often.

   (a) The teacher and the counselor decide to install a program in which Bill is excluded from the class each time that he is late. The teacher will inform the school principal and Bill's parents each time that he is late to class.

   (b) The counselor invites Bill to the office to discuss the problem. During the interview Bill suggests that getting along better with his teacher is something he would like to do. The counselor encourages him and sets up a schedule of appointments to see him regarding his problem.

   (c) The teacher has observed that Bill responds positively to her approval. The counselor suggests she should respond positively to Bill each time he arrives to class on time. The other students are to be rewarded for not paying attention to Bill when he is late.

(Please relax a bit before going on.)

SYSTEMATIC DESENSITIZATION FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Name_____

(Remember, there may be more than one correct answer)

PRE-TEST

1. In systematic desensitization a response is made to occur which is incompatible with anxious responding. This incompatible response is elecited in the presence of the anxiety-evoking stimuli. This incompatible response is typically:
   (a) rational-emotional control,
   (b) a hierarchy item,
   (c) deep muscle relaxation,
   (d) a good stiff drink,
   (e) reinforcement by the counselor.

2. Which of the following are major components of systematic desensitization?
   (a) relaxation training,
   (b) clarification of the client's feelings,
   (c) hierarchy construction,
   (d) counterposing the anxiety inhibiting responses and the anxiety-evoking stimuli,
   (e) bringing into balance the forces of the Id and the Superego.

3. Which of the following are situations where systematic desensitization is applicable?
   (a) when anxiety is strong enough to make a person very uncomfortable in the absence of objective danger or threat,
   (b) when the response pattern of anxiety becomes sufficiently specific to produce ulcers, headaches, or other psychosomatic disorders,
   (c) when the person becomes so anxious he cannot function as he wants to -- he freezes up or panics,
   (d) when a person will not try new things or ways of doing things because of the potential anxiety,
   (e) when maladaptive behaviors are learned and maintained to alleviate or avoid anxiety.

4. List three types of client problems typical to your work situation where you feel that systematic desensitization (or some variation of it) might be an effective method of treatment?

   (a)

   (b)

   (c)

Please <u>wait</u> until asked to turn page

## Here's Some Basic Information

What is systematic desensitization?

Systematic desensitization is the piecemeal breaking down of maladaptive anxious behavior. It uses a response that is incompatible with anxious behavior, in order to inhibit the anxious behavior. This is done by evoking weakly and repeating the exposure until the stimulus completely loses its anxiety-evoking ability. Then progressively stronger stimuli are introduced and similarly treated. This is continued until the anxiety producing stimuli can be presented full strength without eliciting any noticeable anxiety.

What are the major components of systematic desensitization?

1. Relaxation training. Relaxation training is the "active component" in systematic desensitization. Since a person cannot be relaxed and anxious at the same time a state of deep relaxation may be used to inhibit anxiety. Very few people can relax completely at will so a system of relaxation training is taught to the client.

Two common variations of the relaxation proceedure are:

a) when the client is being gradually exposed to the threatening situation in real life, a person whom the client feels relaxed with; e.g., the counselor, a parent or friend, can accompany the client.

b) assertive training. Quite often being assertive is incompatible with being anxious. Therefore counselors will often instruct their clients in how to be assertive in the face of anxiety-evoking stimuli.

Turn at will.

2. Hierarchy construction. An anxiety hierarchy is a list of stimuli dealing with a common anxiety producing situation, ranked in descending order according to the amount of anxiety they evoke.

EXAMPLE -- Fear of Taking Tests.

1. Two weeks before your math final exam.
2. Five days before your math final exam.
3. Three days before your math final exam.
4. One day before your math final exam.
5. The night before your math final exam.
6. Before the unopened doors of the final examination room.
7. Awaiting the distribution of the math final exam.
8. The math final exam lies face down before you.
9. In the process of taking your math final exam.

Turn when you feel in the mood.

3. Counterposing the anxiety inhibiting responses and the anxiety-evoking stimuli. First, a deep state of relaxation is induced in the client. The counselor then presents the lowest item on the hierarchy and pauses to allow the client to imagine the scene. Next, the client is relaxed again and the scene presented for a second time. In this fashion each scene is presented until it can be clearly imagined for a given period of time, without experiencing any anxiety or tension.

   Should any given item result in anxiety reactions, the client is immediately instructed to stop imagining the scene and relaxation is induced again. Once relaxed, the client is presented with the scene for the second time.

   In this way the counselor and client work through the hierarchy. Systematic desensitization is considered successful when the client is able to visualize the most stressful scenes on his list without anxiety and transfer this calmness to real life situations.

Go ahead, turn the damn thing.

THIS IS YOUR LAST CHANCE TO TURN THE PAGE WHEN YOU WANT TO

When should systematic desensitization be used?

Systematic desensitization can be used:

1. when anxiety is strong enough to make a person very uncomfortable in the absence of objective danger or threat,

2. when the response pattern of anxiety becomes sufficiently specific to produce ulcers, headaches, or other psychosomatic disorders,

3. when the person becomes so anxious he cannot function as he wants to -- he freezes up or panics,

4. when a person will not try new things or ways of doing things because of the potential anxiety,

5. when maladaptive behaviors are learned and maintained to alleviate or avoid anxiety.

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SYSTEMATIC DESENSITIZATION FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Name_____

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Post-Test

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   (b)

   (c)

Please tear out pre- and post-tests -- fold in the middle and hand forward.

Thank you!

## Answers to Post-Test

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This is your copy of the test.

# SYSTEMATIC DESENSITIZATION FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Name_____

**Post-Test Answers**

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   (b)

   (c)

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